BEFORE THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY STATE OF NEVADA

In Re:

Nevada Connections Academy Notice of Closure or Possible Board Reconstitution

DECLARATION OF JACKI RICHARDS

I, Jacki Richards, hereby declare under penalty of perjury as follows:

- 1. I am a Nevada Connections Academy ("NCA") employee. I make this declaration in support of NCA relative to closure proceedings before the State Public Charter School Authority held on May 25, 26, and 27, 2017, and continued to an unspecified date in 2017.
- 2. The matters set forth in this declaration are based on my own personal knowledge. If called upon to testify, I am competent to testify to the matters set forth herein.
- 3. I have been employed with NCA for just over seven years, and have held the job title Registrar for over five years. Prior to that, I served as the Enrollment Specialist and Receptionist. I have also assisted in State Reporting.
- 4. Based on my experiences with enrollment calls—in which we call our perspective families who sign up to start the enrollment process—I have spoken to families that state they wanted to be more involved in their students' education, and families that have had major difficulties with bullying, as well as families who have very active students, involved in professional sports, or acting, and need the flexibility to do their work and stay in school. I have also encountered parents who explained that their local school or another charter school to which they applied advised them that their child could not enroll either because his or her credits were

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low, or it was too late in the school year. One parent in particular told me that the charter school her child recently attended told her she had to leave after failing only one course in her first semester of ninth grade, earning 2.5 credits at the end of that first semester. Therefore, many of the parents and students I encountered during enrollment calls were either denied enrollment at another school, or advised to go elsewhere. I have also spoken with several registrars over the years I have been in this position, who have told me that they referred several students to NCA, because they were not successful in passing or attending classes at those schools.

- 5. Up until this school year, I personally entered almost all of the incoming high school student transcripts into our school system. This year, our team of counselors have started to share in this task, however I still personally confirm all of these entries when cross checking them against the official transcripts I receive when I request cumulative records. I have seen, over these years, that what appears to be a very large number of our enrolling students each year, come in with a large amount of failed classes, causing them to be behind on credits. I have also seen that instead of having these students repeat the core courses they need to graduate, these students are allowed to move onto the next level course, as well as taking more electives. Often, this results in continuous failure. When these students then enroll at NCA, they are often so far behind, that the likelihood of them being able to catch up on time for their cohort graduation is very slim.
- 6. With the implementation of Grad Point, NCA now has a better chance of getting these students caught up. I saw a student this year who was in either 9th or 10th grade based on credits, worked hard enough through his/her credit recovery to catch up enough to graduate on time. Though Grad Point program is newer to NCA (only in full use for the first time in the 2016-2017 school year), based on that one student alone, the program shows a great increase in

our ability to help our students try to catch up. They may not catch up by their cohort, but they are still working towards graduation.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Nevada that the foregoing is true and corrected and was executed this 4th day of June, 2017, in Reno Nevada.

ACKI RICHARDS